THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) The next general elections to the Lok Sabha may be held on the basis of the newly carved out constituencies only if these delimitation orders in respect of all the parliamentary and assembly constituencies are issued by the Delimitation Commission and notified by the President under the second provision to article 82 of the Constitution by then. So far, the Delimitation Commission has completed delimitation work in respect of 22 States/Union Territories, namely, Kerala, Tripura, Mizoram, Goa, Pondicherry, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Punjab, Maharasthra, Sikkim, National Capital Territory of Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa, Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Meghalaya. Meanwhile, the Government has received numerous representations challenging the provisions of the Delimitation Act, the procedure adopted by the Commission, the guidelines issued by it in pursuance thereto as well as the recommendations as regards delimitation of constituencies made by it.

Illegal mining in Karnataka

221. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of inspections carried out by Government to check illegal mining in Karnataka;

(b) the number of illegal mining projects;

(c) the action taken by Government against the offenders; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to stop illegal mining in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) to (d) State Governments have been empowered under Mines and Mineral (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 to curb illegal mining, transportation and storage etc. During the year 2006 State Government of Karnataka has detected 3027 cases of illegal mining in which 3.05 lakh metric tonnes of ore/minerals seized, 3378 vehicles seized, 427 FIR lodged, 277 court cases filed and Rs. 719.76 lakhs realized as fine. The Central Government has also directed State Governments to frame rules, constitute task forces at State/District level for preventing of illegal mining and furnish quarterly return on illegal mining for review by Ministry of Mines. The State Government of Karnataka has constituted State Level and District Level Task Force Committee to curb the instances of illegal mining.

Violation of norms for leasing iron-ore mines

222. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Centre has come across any case in the country where the State Governments are violating the laid norms and have given any company iron ore mines on lease and the permission to extract the ore;

(b) if so, whether the Obulapuram mines in Anatapur district of Andhra Pradesh fall under the said category;

(c) if so, the measures being taken to discourage such illegal extraction of mineral wealth of the country; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) As per the report received from the Indian Bureau of Mines, which is the regulatory body for enforcing the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 and the Rules framed thereunder, no case of violation of the laid-down norms by the State Governments for grant of mining leases and permission for extraction of iron ore across the country has come to notice.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Export of mineral resources

223. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Taskforce appointed by the Planning Commission has recommended the opening of our mineral resources for exports;

(b) if so, whether it would any way affect industrialization of the country; and

(c) whether Government are considering to have a re-look into the whole issue of National Mineral Policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) to (c) A High Level Committee (HLC) under the Chairmanship of Shri Anwarul Hoda, Member, Planning Commission was constituted to review the National Mineral Policy, 1993, and suggest measures to improve the flow of private investment and introduction of state-of-the-art technology in exploration and mining in India. Exports of minerals in India continue to be guided by EXIM policy notified by the Government. However, the HLC took up export of iron ore as one of the issues, not specifically included in the Terms of Reference, whose resolution was considered as crucial for stimulating investment and technology flows into the mining sector. The National Mineral Policy is under consideration of the Central Government.

Gold deposits in Orissa

224. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether gold deposits have been discovered recently in Orissa by the Geological Survey of India and the Geology Department of the State; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating the extent of deposits, their commercial vaibility and by when mining thereof is likely to begin, if commercially viable?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) No, Sir. Neither Geological Survey of India (GSI) nor Directorate of Geology, Orissa have discovered any gold deposits recently in Orissa.

(b) Question does, not arise.

Mining projects in Andhra Pradesh

225. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sanctioned any projects of mining in Andhra Pradesh during the last three years;